

Week Ending Friday, July 12, 2002

**Statement on the Death of
Ted Williams**

July 5, 2002

With the passing of Ted Williams, America lost a baseball legend. Whether serving the country in the Armed Forces or excelling on the baseball diamond, Ted Williams demonstrated unique talent and love of country. He inspired young ballplayers across the Nation for decades, and we will always remember his persistence on the field and his courage off the field. Ted gave baseball some of its best seasons—and he gave his own best seasons to his country. He will be greatly missed.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Exchange With Reporters in
Kennebunkport, Maine**

July 6, 2002

President's Birthday

The President. Good morning, everybody.

Q. Happy birthday.

The President. That's the way we like it, up and early.

Q. We do too. [Laughter]

The President. Up and at 'em. Feeling a little older, if you know what I mean.

David [David Gregory, NBC News], how are you, lad?

President's Upcoming Vacation

Q. All right. Sir, now that you're a little older and wiser, are you rethinking avoiding spending all of August here?

The President. No, I think—I think you'll like Crawford.

Former President Bush. It's warmer there.

Q. Do you have any words of wisdom for him on the vacation schedule?

Former President Bush. I've got words of wisdom for Eric. He ought to get out of there.

The President. Get out of there, Eric. [Laughter]

[At this point, the President continued to prepare for his golf outing.]

President's Hat

Q. What does your hat say?

The President. *El Jefe*. That's French. [Laughter]

Q. I was going to sing for you in another language.

The President. Thank you, sir. That's an inside joke.

[The President continued to prepare for his golf outing.]

Former President Bush. No laughing about the ladies' tee.

President's Birthday

Q. Sir, what do you want for your birthday?

The President. I don't know yet. I haven't thought about it. First of all, I'm glad—I'm glad my mother and wife remembered. [Laughter]

[The President prepared to tee off.]

The President. Yes, Mr. President. Nice, gentle applause rippling throughout the gallery.

See you in a couple hours—like 2.

[The round of golf proceeded.]

The President. I apologize.

Q. Yes, right.

The President. Miserable shot.

Q. You didn't have any idea where we were, either, did you?

The President. It's clear I didn't have any idea where the ball was going—

Q. Mr. President, it's up by the tree, sir.

The President. Who kicked it under there? [Laughter]

Q. David did. [*Laughter*]

The President. I was just kidding about the French thing. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The exchange began at 6:15 a.m. at the Cape Arundel Golf Course. In his remarks, the President referred to White House Director of Photography Eric Draper. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on the Situation in Afghanistan and an Exchange With Reporters in Kennebunkport

July 6, 2002

Assassination of Vice President Haji Abdul Qadir of Afghanistan

The President. Today Vice President Qadir of Afghanistan was gunned down. The administration and our country mourns the loss of a man who desired freedom and stability for the country he loved. We have been in touch with Chairman Karzai, expressed our deepest condolences to the Chairman and the Government and people of Afghanistan, who lost a good and valued friend.

The Afghan Government is in the process of investigating who might have done this. And we are more resolved than ever to bring stability to the country so that the Afghan people can have peace and hope.

I'll answer a couple of questions.

Q. Mr. President, did you personally call Chairman Karzai? And what does this say about the ability of a new Government to form and actually succeed there, and what are your concerns?

The President. No, I haven't spoken to Chairman Karzai yet. I spoke to him yesterday, interestingly enough, to express our condolences about the loss of life during the military action. He was talked to by a member of my national security team.

I am confident and I believe Chairman Karzai is confident that with patience and with aid and with a proper strategy, that Afghanistan can develop into a peaceful and hopeful nation.

Bombing of Afghan Civilians

Q. Sir, what do you say to the Afghan people who are upset about the bombing of civilians?

The President. Well, I say, you know, we're investigating. I say "we." Both the Afghanistan Government and the United States Government are investigating to find out the facts. But I can say to the Afghan people exactly what I told to Chairman Karzai, "Any time innocent life is lost, we're sad. Our country values life, all life, and we'll find out what the facts are and then address it accordingly."

Assassination of Vice President Haji Abdul Qadir of Afghanistan

Q. Can the United States or the FBI or someone help with the investigation of the assassination, or will they?

The President. Well, we'll find out. Right now the Afghan Government believes they can handle the investigation. There's all kinds of scenarios as to how the—who killed him. But we'll work closely with the Government if they want us to.

Q. Sir, is there any sign that this kind of assassination may be connected to terrorist groups who are trying to get more involved in the country?

The President. It could be that. It could be drug lords. It could be longtime rivals. Who knows? All we know is a good man is dead, and we mourn his loss.

All right, thank you all. Thanks.

President's Birthday

Q. Birthday plans, sir?

The President. Let's see, settling in, a family lunch, may go for a run—it will be a mechanical run, however.

Q. Why, not hot enough?

The President. No, I wish I could get off the Point, but I think the agents will say today it's probably best for me to stay on Walker's Point.

Let's see, what else will be happening? Who knows? Maybe a surprise party. [*Laughter*] Other than that, just hanging out with my family, which is a wonderful gift unto itself.

Thank you all.